

# Yale-Vermont Adversity in Childhood Scale (Y-VACS)

Kaufman, J. & Hudziak, J.J. (2014; updated 2020)

## SCORING MANUAL

**Item Specific Severity Scoring Criteria:** If the child has experienced multiple incidents of a given category of adversity, rate the most severe incident of the event.

| <b>Abuse, Neglect, and Caregiver-Related Childhood Adversities</b>   | <b>Severity Rating</b>  |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Psychological Abuse.</i> A parent or other adult in the household told child that s/he is no good, yelled at child in a scary way, or threatened to harm, abandon, leave, or send child away.  | 1 = Yell at child in scary way; tell child they are no good<br>2 = Threaten to leave child, send child away, wish child never born<br>3 = Abandon child   |
| 2. <i>Physical Abuse.</i> A parent or other adult in the household physically assaulted the child (e.g., hit, push, choke, shake, throw, bite, burn), or caused bruises or physical injury when disciplining the child.  | 1 = Excessive discipline (e.g., hit with belt, no bruises)<br>2 = Bruises or welts resulting from physical abuse or excessive discipline.<br>3 = Laceration, burns, broken bones.   |
| 3. <i>Sexual Abuse.</i> A parent, other adult in the household, or other family member made child see (e.g., watch pornography, watch adult masturbate) or do something sexual (e.g., fondle, oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse).   | 1 = Sexual abuse suspected; child shown pornography; sexualized touching over clothing.<br>2 = Genital fondling; oral-genital contact.<br>3 = Vaginal or anal penetration.  |
| 4. <i>Neglect.</i> Child lacked appropriate care (e.g., not enough to eat or drink, hygiene not attended to, lacked shelter, left alone when too young to care for himself/herself or left with inappropriate caregiver (e.g. sex offender, intoxicated individual), not provided routine or urgent medical care). | 1 = One form of neglect experienced.<br>2 = Two or three forms of neglect experienced.<br>3 = Four or more forms of neglect experienced <u>or</u> one form of neglect associated with significant risk of injury (e.g., leaving young child unattended or in care of sex offender).   |
| 5. <i>Loss.</i> Separated from biological or psychological parent or other close family member due to major illness or hospitalization, incarceration, divorce, immigration, war, foster care, or death).  | 1 = Parents separated or divorced; regular contact with non-custodial parent; or isolated brief episode of separation due to parental illness, hospitalization, or incarceration.<br>2 = Prolonged (e.g., greater than one year) separation due to parental illness, hospitalization, or incarceration; or isolated episode of out-of-home placement due to abuse or neglect; parents separated or divorced, irregular or no contact with non-custodial parent (score '1' if in child's best interest that there is no contact with non-custodial parent).<br>3 = Death of a parent; death of a sibling, repeat parent-child separations due to abuse or neglect. |
| 6. <i>Domestic Violence:</i> Child witnessed parent or other adult in the household fighting (e.g., slap, hit, push, kick, threaten with weapon, injure with weapon).  | 1 = Severe yelling matches; objects thrown, no one hit.<br>2 = Pushing, shoving, hitting; no physical injuries.<br>3 = Physical injuries as a result of domestic violence; threats with or use of weapon.   |
| 7. <i>Caregiver Substance Abuse:</i> Parent or other adult in household abused alcohol or drugs.   | 1 = Non-custodial parent has substance abuse problem.<br>2 = One custodial parent has substance abuse problem.<br>3 = Multiple adults in the home have substance abuse problems.  |
| 8. <i>Suicidality:</i> A parent, other adult in the household, or other close family member attempted suicide or intentionally harmed self.  | 1 = Exposure to acts of self-injurious behavior without suicide intent.<br>2 = Isolated incident of non-lethal suicide attempt.<br>3 = Lethal suicide attempt or exposure to multiple non-lethal suicide attempts.  |
| 9. <i>Caregiver Criminal Behavior:</i> A parent or other adult in the household arrested, jailed, or imprisoned.   | 1 = Parents arrested, never sentenced for extended jail term.<br>2 = One parent incarcerated for extended period (> then 6 months).<br>3 = Both parents incarcerated for extended period .  |
| 10. <i>COVID-19 Intra-familial Related Stressors and Traumas:</i>  | 1=Routines interrupted, no change in family employment, able to meet fiscal responsibilities.<br>2=Change in routines, one or more caregiver(s) lost employment, some trouble meeting fiscal responsibilities; food insecurity; and/or immediate family member experienced mild symptoms associated with COVID-19.<br>3=Severe disruption in routines/lifestyle; one or more caregiver(s) lost employment; and significant trouble meeting fiscal responsibilities; hunger; and/or immediate family member experienced severe symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., hospitalization).   |

| Extra-familial Childhood Adversities  | Severity Rating   |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>Community Violence</i> : Child witnessed community violence (e.g., beatings, shootings, murders).   | 1 = Child witnessed moderate (e.g., assault) community violence.<br>2 = Child witnessed severe (e.g., weapon related, lethal) community violence; child or loved one victim of moderate (e.g., assault) community violence.<br>3 = Child or loved one victim of severe community violence.  |
| 2. <i>Bullying</i> : Child bullied in school or the community (e.g., teased, beaten up, threatened).  | 1 = Bullied in one setting (e.g., school, neighborhood, cyberspace); no physical assaults.<br>2 = Bullied in multiple settings or bullying associated with physical assault (e.g., pushed, beat up, thrown in dumpster) without serious injury.<br>3 = Bullying associated with physical assault and serious injury.  |
| 3. <i>War or Terrorism</i> : Child exposed to war, armed conflict, or terrorism.  | 1 = Near, but not in immediate vicinity of war zone or terrorism situation.<br>2 = In immediate vicinity of war zone or terrorism situation; neither child nor loved one injured.<br>3 = In immediate vicinity of war zone or terrorism situation; child and/or loved one injured or killed.  |
| 4. <i>Sexual Assault by Non-Family/Non-Household Member</i> : Individual attempted or forced the child to engage in sexual activity (e.g., fondle, oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse).                     | 1 = Child shown pornography; subjected to sexualized touching over clothing.<br>2 = Genital fondling; oral-genital contact.<br>3 = Vaginal or anal penetration.   |
| 5. <i>Accident</i> : Car or other accident resulting in serious injury or death. Do not count routine childhood accidents or injuries (e.g., simple fractures, small lacerations requiring a few stitches). | 1 = Child or loved one experienced a period of unconsciousness, had a complex fracture, or required more than a dozen stitches.<br>2 = Child or loved one required overnight or longer hospital stay to treat injuries.<br>3 = Accident resulted in permanent disability of child or permanent disability or death of a loved one.  |
| 6. <i>Natural Disaster</i> : Floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, or other natural disasters.  | 1 = Exposure associated with significant property damage.<br>2 = Exposure posed risk to the safety of the child.<br>3 = Exposure resulted in serious injury to the child or serious injury or death of a loved one.   |
| 7. <i>Health Related Trauma</i> :   | 1 = Hospital care required for acute or chronic medical condition (e.g., asthma attack); common child surgeries (e.g. appendectomy, tonsillitis, tubes in ears), or extended absences from school required due to health related problems (> 30 days).<br>2 = Overnight stays in hospital to address acute or chronic medical condition.<br>3 = Life threatening medical health problem.  |
| 8. <i>Death of a Loved One, Non-Immediate Family Member</i> :   | 1 = Death of a non-immediate family member in a non-caregiver role.<br>2 = Death of a non-immediate family member in a caregiver role.<br>3 = Death of multiple non-immediate family members in caregivers roles.   |
| 9. <i>Fire</i> : Fire causes significant property damage or life threatening.   | 1 = Fire lead to significant property damage, or significant risk of injury to the child or a loved one.<br>2 = Fire resulted in injury to child or a loved one.<br>3 = Fire associated with death of a loved one.  |
| 10. <i>COVID-19 Extra-familial Related Stressors and Traumas</i> :  | 1=Unable to visit with non-immediate family member supports;<br>2=Unable to visit with non-immediate family member supports; non-immediate family members experience moderate stress associated with COVID-19 events (e.g., Change in routines, one or more non-immediate family member lost employment, some trouble meeting fiscal responsibilities; food insecurity; and/or non-immediate family member experienced mild symptoms associated with COVID-19).<br>3=Unable to visit with non-immediate family member supports; non-immediate family members experienced severe stress associated with COVID-19 events (Severe disruption in routines/lifestyle; lost employment; and significant trouble meeting fiscal responsibilities; hunger; and/or non-immediate family member experienced severe symptoms of COVID-19 requiring hospitalization). |